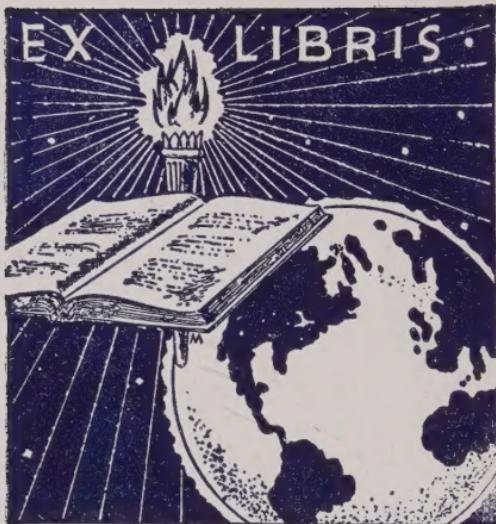


# RILEY SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP

JAMES  
WHITCOMB  
RILEY



This Book Is A Gift  
to the  
Library  
of  
Lincoln Bible Institute  
by  
Mrs. Elsie Rosenberger  
Canton, Ohio  
In Memory of

John W. Myers

To my daughter Elsie  
Christmas eve 1916

Glean from these pages wealth  
of thought that money  
cannot purchase.

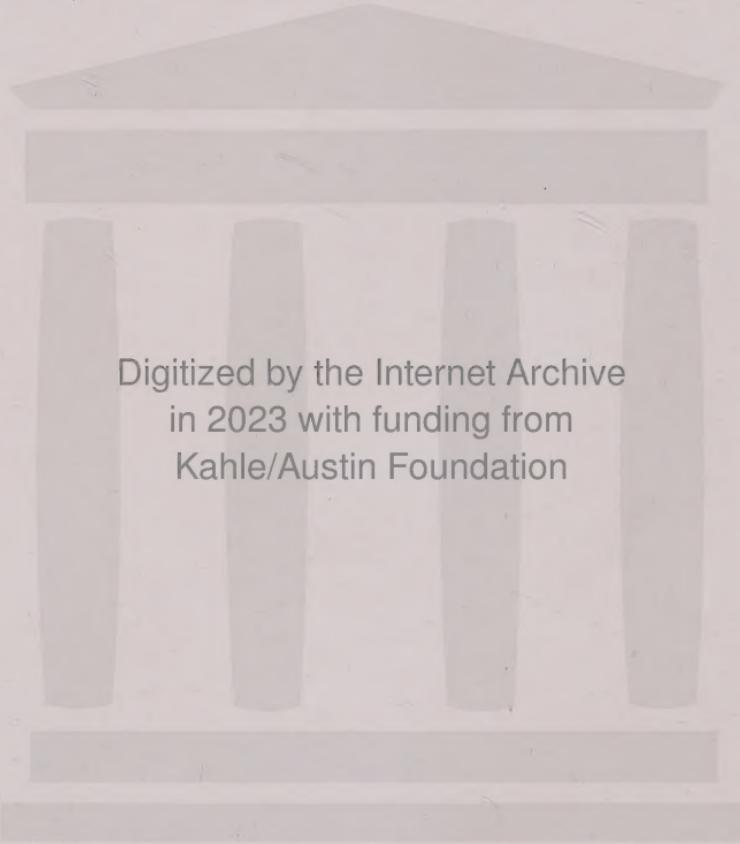
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RILEY SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP



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# RILEY SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

WITH PICTURES BY  
WILL VAWTER



NEW YORK  
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JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

To

Young E. Allison—Bookman

THE BOOKMAN he's a humming-bird—

His feasts are honey-fine,—

(With hi! hiloo!

And clover-dew

And roses lush and rare!)

His roses are the phrase and word

Of olden tomes divine;

(With hi! and ho!

And pinks ablow

And posies everywhere!)

The Bookman he's a humming-bird,—

He steals from song to song—

He scents the ripest-blooming rhyme,

And takes his heart along

And sacks all sweets of bursting verse

And ballads, throng on throng.

(With ho! and hey!

And brook and brae,

And brink of shade and shine!)

A humming-bird the Bookman is—

Though cumbrous, gray and grim,—

(With hi! hiloo!

And honey-dew

And odors musty-rare!)

He bends him o'er that page of his

As o'er the rose's rim.

(With hi! and ho!

And pinks aglow

And roses everywhere!)

Ay, he's the featest humming-bird,

On airiest of wings

He poises pendent o'er the poem

That blossoms as it sings—

God friend him as he dips his beak

In such delicious things!

(With ho! and hey!

And world away

And only dreams for him!)



**O** FRIENDS of mine, whose kindly words come to me  
Voiced only in lost lisps of ink and pen,  
If I had power to tell the good you do me,  
And how the blood you warm goes laughing through me,  
My tongue would babble baby-talk again.

And I would toddle round the world to meet you—  
Fall at your feet, and clamber to your knees  
And with glad, happy hands would reach and greet you,  
And twine my arms about you, and entreat you  
For leave to weave a thousand rhymes like these—

A thousand rhymes entwrought of nought but presses  
Of cherry-lip and apple-cheek and chin,  
And pats of honeyed palms, and rare caresses,  
And all the sweets of which as Fancy guesses  
She folds away her wings and swoons therein.



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# RILEY SONGS OF FRIENDSHIP





## BACK FROM TOWN

OLD friends allus is the best,  
Halest-like and heartiest:  
Knowed us first, and don't allow  
We're so blame much better now!  
They was standin' at the bars  
When we grabbed "the kivvered kyars"  
And lit out fer town, to make  
Money—and that old mistake!

BACK FROM TOWN

We thought then the world we went  
Into beat "The Settlement,"  
And the friends 'at we'd make there  
Would beat any anywhere!—  
And they *do*—fer that's their *biz*:  
They beat all the friends they is—  
'Cept the *raal* old friends like you  
'At staid at home, like *I'd* ort to!

W'y, of all the good things yit  
I ain't shet of, is to quit  
Business, and git back to sheer  
These old comforts waitin' here—  
These old friends; and these old hands  
'At a feller understands;  
These old winter nights, and old  
Young-folks chased in out the cold!

Sing "Hard Times'll come ag'in  
No More!" and neighbors all jine in!  
Here's a feller come from town  
Wants that-air old fiddle down  
From the chimbly!—Git the floor  
Cleared fer one cowtillion more!—  
It's poke the kitchen fire, says he,  
And shake a friendly leg with me!



### A HOBO VOLUNTARY

**O**H, the hobo's life is a roving life;  
It robs pretty maids of their heart's delight--  
It causes them to weep and it causes them to mourn  
For the life of a hobo, never to return.

The hobo's heart it is light and free,  
Though it's Sweethearts all, farewell, to thee!—  
Farewell to thee, for it's far away  
The homeless hobo's footsteps stray.

In the morning bright, or the dusk so dim,  
It's any path is the one for him!  
He'll take his chances, long or short,  
For to meet his fate with a valiant heart.

A HOBO VOLUNTARY

Oh, it's beauty mops out the sidetracked-car,  
And it's beauty-beaut' at the pigs-feet bar;  
But when his drinks and his eats is made  
Then the hobo shunts off down the grade.

He camps near town, on the old crick-bank,  
And he cuts his name on the water-tank—  
He cuts his name and the hobo sign,—  
“Bound for the land of corn and wine!”

(Oh, it's I like friends that he'ps me through,  
And the friends also that he'ps you, too,—  
Oh, I like all friends, 'most every kind  
But I don't like friends that don't like mine.)

There's friends of mine, when they gits the hunch,  
Comes a swarmin' in, the blasted bunch,—  
“Clog-step Jonny” and “Flat-wheel Bill”  
And “Brockey Ike” from Circleville.

With “Cooney Ward” and “Sikes the Kid”  
And old “Pop Lawson”—the best we had—  
The rankest mug and the worst for lush  
And the dandiest of the whole blame push.





Oh, them's the times I remembers best  
When I took my chance with all the rest,  
And hogged fried chicken and roastin' ears, too,  
And sucked cheroots when the feed was through.

Oh, the hobo's way is the railroad line,  
And it's little he cares for schedule time ;  
Whatever town he's a-striken for  
Will wait for him till he gits there.

And whatever burg that he lands in  
There's beauties there just thick for him—  
There's beauty at "The Queen's Taste Lunch-stand,"  
sure,  
Or "The Last Chance Boardin' House" back-door.

He's lonesome-like, so he gits run in,  
To git the hang o' the world ag'in ;  
But the laundry circles he moves in there  
Makes him sigh for the country air,—

A HOBO VOLUNTARY

So it's Good-by gals! and he takes his chance  
And wads hisself through the workhouse-fence:  
He sheds the town and the railroad, too,  
And strikes mud roads for a change of view.

The jay drives by on his way to town,  
And looks on the hobo in high scorn,  
And so likewise does the farmhands stare—  
But what the hails does the hobo care!

He hits the pike, in the summer's heat  
Or the winter's cold, with its snow and sleet—  
With a boot on one foot, and one shoe—  
Or he goes barefoot, if he chooses to.

But he likes the best, when the days is warm,  
With his bum Prince-Albert on his arm—  
He likes to size up a farmhouse where  
They haint no man nor bulldog there.

Oh, he gits his meals wherever he can,  
So natchurly he's a handy man—  
He's a handy man both day and night,  
And he's always blest with an appetite!





A HOBO VOLUNTARY

A tin o' black coffee, and a rhubarb pie—  
Be they old and cold as charity—  
They're hot-stuff enough for the pore hobo,  
And it's "Thanks, kind lady, for to treat me so!"

Then he fills his pipe with a stub cigar  
And swipes a coal from the kitchen fire,  
And the hired girl says, in a smilin' tone,—  
"It's good-by, John, if you call that goin'!"

Oh, the hobo's life is a roving life,  
It robs pretty maids of their heart's delight—  
It causes them to weep and it causes them to mourn  
For the life of a hobo, never to return.





## BE OUR FORTUNES AS THEY MAY

**B**E our fortunes as they may,  
Touched with loss or sorrow,  
Saddest eyes that weep to-day  
May be glad to-morrow.

Yesterday the rain was here,  
And the winds were blowing—  
Sky and earth and atmosphere  
Brimmed and overflowing.

BE OUR FORTUNES AS THEY MAY

But to-day the sun is out,  
And the drear November  
We were then so vexed about  
Now we scarce remember.

Yesterday you lost a friend—  
Bless your heart and love it!—  
For you scarce could comprehend  
All the aching of it;—

But I sing to you and say:  
Let the lost friend sorrow—  
Here's another come to-day,  
Others may to-morrow.

## I SMOKE MY PIPE

I CAN'T extend to every friend  
    In need a helping hand—  
No matter though I wish it so,  
    'Tis not as Fortune planned;  
But haply may I fancy they  
    Are men of different stripe  
Than others think who hint and wink,—  
    And so—I smoke my pipe!

A golden coal to crown the bowl—  
    My pipe and I alone,—  
I sit and muse with idler views  
    Perchance than I should own :—  
It might be worse to own the purse  
    Whose glutted bowels gripe  
In little qualms of stinted alms;  
    And so I smoke my pipe.





I SMOKE MY PIPE

And if inclined to moor my mind  
    And cast the anchor Hope,  
A puff of breath will put to death  
    The morbid misanthrope  
That lurks inside--as errors hide  
    In standing forms of type  
To mar at birth some line of worth ;  
    And so I smoke my pipe.

The subtle stings misfortune flings  
    Can give me little pain  
When my narcotic spell has wrought  
    This quiet in my brain :  
When I can waste the past in taste  
    So luscious and so ripe  
That like an elf I hug myself ;  
    And so I smoke my pipe.

And wrapped in shrouds of drifting clouds  
    I watch the phantom's flight,  
Till alien eyes from Paradise  
    Smile on me as I write :  
And I forgive the wrongs that live,  
    As lightly as I wipe  
Away the tear that rises here ;  
    And so I smoke my pipe.



### UNCLE SIDNEY TO MARCELLUS

M ARCELLUS, won't you tell us—  
Truly tell us, if you can,—  
What will you be, Marcellus,  
When you get to be a man?

You turn, with never answer  
But to the band that plays.—  
O rapt and eerie dancer,  
What of your future days?

UNCLE SIDNEY TO MARCELLUS

Far in the years before us  
We *dreamers* see your fame,  
While song and praise in chorus  
Make music of your name.

And though our dreams foretell us  
As only visions can,  
You must prove it, O Marcellus,  
When you get to be a man !

A SONG BY UNCLE SIDNEY

O WERE I not a clod, intent  
On being just an earthly thing,  
I'd be that rare embodiment  
Of Heart and Spirit, Voice and Wing,  
With pure, ecstatic, rapture-sent,  
Divinely-tender twittering  
That Echo swoons to re-present,—  
A bluebird in the Spring.



## THE POET'S LOVE FOR THE CHILDREN

KINDLY and warm and tender,  
He nestled each childlike palm  
So close in his own that his touch was a prayer  
And his speech a blessed psalm.

He has turned from the marvelous pages  
Of many an alien tome—  
Haply come down from Olivet,  
Or out from the gates of Rome—





THE POET'S LOVE FOR THE CHILDREN

Set sail o'er the seas between him  
And each little beckoning hand  
That fluttered about in the meadows  
And groves of his native land,—

Fluttered and flashed on his vision  
As, in the glimmering light  
Of the orchard-lands of childhood,  
The blossoms of pink and white.

And there have been sobs in his bosom,  
As out on the shores he stept,  
And many a little welcomer  
Has wondered why he wept.—

That was because, O children,  
Ye might not always be  
The same that the Savior's arms were wound  
About, in Galilee.



## FRIEND OF A WAYWARD HOUR

**F**RIEND of a wayward hour, you came  
Like some good ghost, and went the same;  
And I within the haunted place  
Sit smiling on your vanished face,  
And talking with—your name,

But thrice the pressure of your hand—  
First hail—congratulations—and  
Your last “God bless you!” as the train  
That brought you snatched you back again  
Into the unknown land.

FRIEND OF A WAYWARD HOUR

“God bless me?” Why, your very prayer  
Was answered ere you asked it there,  
I know—for when you came to lend  
Me your kind hand, and call me friend,  
God blessed me unaware.

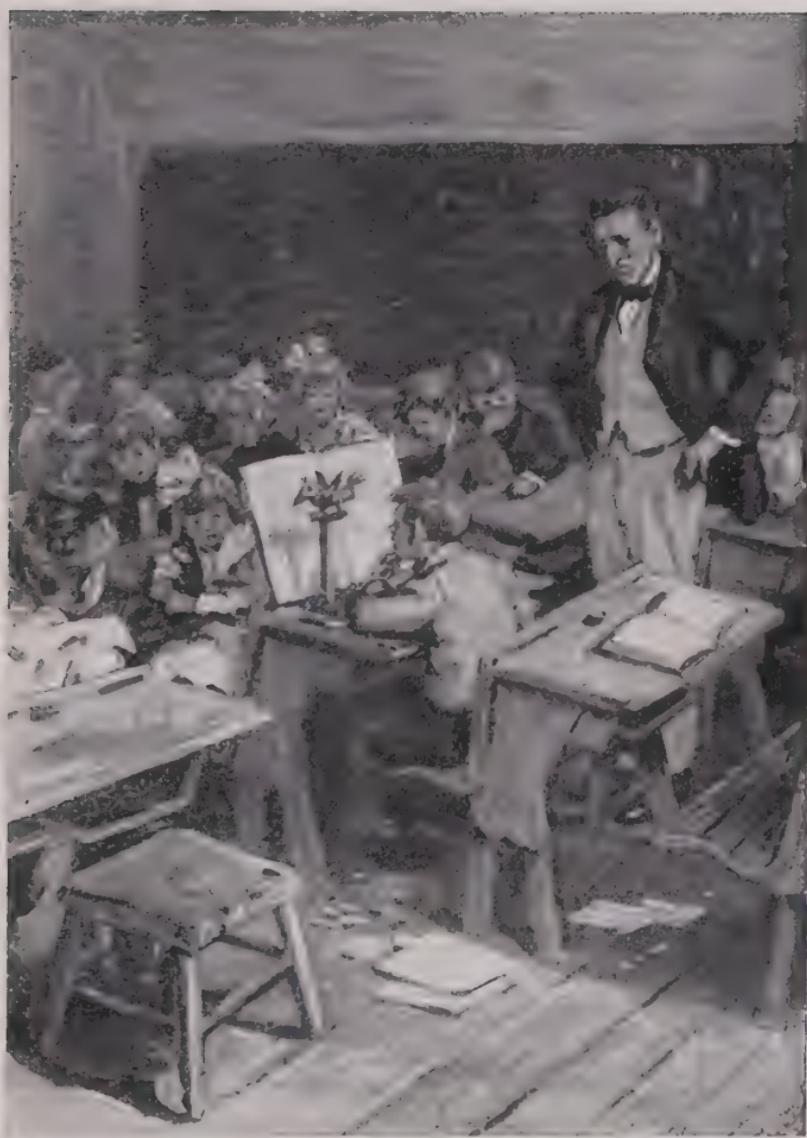




### MY HENRY

H E'S jes' a great, big, awk'ard, hulkin'  
Feller,—humped, and sort o' sulkin'—  
Like, and ruther still-appearin'—  
Kind-as-ef he wuzn't keerin'  
Whether school helt out er not—  
That's my Henry, to a dot!

Allus kind o' liked him—whether  
Childern, er growded-up together!  
Fifteen year' ago and better,  
'Fore he ever knowed a letter,  
Run acrosst the little fool  
In my Primer-class at school.





MY HENRY

When the Teacher wuzn't lookin',  
He'd be th'owin' wads ; er crookin'  
Pins ; er sprinklin' pepper, more'n  
Likely, on the stove ; er borin'  
Gimlet-holes up thue his desk—  
Nothin' *that* boy wouldn't resk !

But, somehow, as I was goin'  
On to say, he seemed so knowin',  
*Other* ways, and cute and cunnin'—  
Allus wuz a notion runnin'  
Thue my giddy, fool-head he  
Jes' had be'n cut out fer me !

Don't go much on *prophesyin'*,  
But last night whilse I wuz fryin'  
Supper, with that man a-pitchin'  
Little Marthy round the kitchen,  
Think-says-I, "Them baby's eyes  
Is my Henry's, jes' p'cise!"



### A LETTER TO A FRIEND

THE past is like a story  
I have listened to in dreams  
That vanished in the glory  
Of the Morning's early gleams ;  
And—at my shadow glancing—  
I feel a loss of strength,  
As the Day of Life advancing  
Leaves it shorn of half its length.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND

But it's all in vain to worry  
At the rapid race of Time—  
And he flies in such a flurry  
When I trip him with a rhyme,  
I'll bother him no longer  
Than to thank you for the thought  
That "my fame is growing stronger  
As you really think it ought."

And though I fall below it,  
I might know as much of mirth  
To live and die a poet  
Of unacknowledged worth;  
For Fame is but a vagrant—  
Though a loyal one and brave,  
And his laurels ne'er so fragrant  
As when scattered o'er the grave.





### THE OLD-FASHIONED BIBLE

HOW dear to my heart are the scenes of my childhood  
That now but in mem'ry I sadly review;  
The old meeting-house at the edge of the wildwood,  
The rail fence and horses all tethered thereto;  
The low, sloping roof, and the bell in the steeple,  
The doves that came fluttering out overhead  
As it solemnly gathered the God-fearing people  
To hear the old Bible my grandfather read.  
The old-fashioned Bible—  
The dust-covered Bible—  
The leathern-bound Bible my grandfather read.





The blessed old volume! The face bent above it—  
As now I recall it—is gravely severe,  
Though the reverent eye that droops downward to love it  
Makes grander the text through the lens of a tear,  
And, as down his features it trickles and glistens,  
The cough of the deacon is stilled, and his head  
Like a haloéd patriarch's leans as he listens  
To hear the old Bible my grandfather read.  
The old-fashioned Bible—  
The dust-covered Bible—  
The leathern-bound Bible my grandfather read.

Ah! who shall look backward with scorn and derision  
And scoff the old book though it uselessly lies  
In the dust of the past, while this newer revision  
Lisps on of a hope and a home in the skies?  
Shall the voice of the Master be stifled and riven?  
Shall we hear but a tithe of the words He has said,  
When so long He has, listening, leaned out of Heaven  
To hear the old Bible my grandfather read?  
The old-fashioned Bible—  
The dust-covered Bible—  
The leathern-bound Bible my grandfather read.



## GOOD-BY ER HOWDY-DO

**S**AY good-by er howdy-do—  
What's the odds betwixt the two?  
Comin'—goin', ev'ry day—  
Best friends first to go away—  
Grasp of hands you'd ruther hold  
Than their weight in solid gold  
Slips their grip while greetin' you.—  
Say good-by er howdy-do!

GOOD-BY ER HOWDY-DO

Howdy-do, and then, good-by—  
Mixes jes' like laugh and cry;  
Deaths and births, and worst and best,  
Tangled their contrariest;  
Ev'ry 'jinglin' weddin'-bell  
Skeerin' up some funer'l knell.—  
Here's my song, and there's your sigh.—  
Howdy-do, and then, good-by!

Say good-by er howdy-do—  
Jes' the same to me and you;  
'Taint worth while to make no fuss,  
'Cause the job's put up on us!  
Some One's runnin' this concern  
That's got nothin' else to learn:  
Ef *He's* willin', we'll pull through—  
Say good-by er howdy-do!



## WHEN WE THREE MEET

WHEN we three meet? Ah! friend of mine  
Whose verses well and flow as wine,—  
My thirsting fancy thou dost fill  
With draughts delicious, sweeter still  
Since tasted by those lips of thine.

I pledge thee, through the chill sunshine  
Of autumn, with a warmth divine,  
Thrilled through as only I shall thrill  
When we three meet.

I pledge thee, if we fast or dine,  
We yet shall loosen, line by line,  
Old ballads, and the blither trill  
Of our-time singers—for there will  
Be with us all the Muses nine  
When we three meet.



### “THE LITTLE MAN IN THE TINSHOP”

WHEN I was a little boy, long ago,  
And spoke of the theater as the “show,”  
The first one that I went to see,  
Mother’s brother it was took me—  
(My uncle, of course, though he seemed to be  
Only a boy—I loved him so!)  
And ah, how pleasant he made it all!  
And the things he knew that *I* should know!—  
The stage, the “drop,” and the frescoed wall;  
The sudden flash of the lights; and oh,  
The orchestra, with its melody,  
And the lilt and jingle and jubilee  
Of “The Little Man in the Tinshop”!

“THE LITTLE MAN IN THE TINSHOP”

For Uncle showed me the “Leader” there,  
With his pale, bleak forehead and long, black hair ;  
Showed me the “Second,” and “ ’Cello,” and “Bass,”  
And the “B-Flat,” pouting and puffing his face  
At the little end of the horn he blew  
Silvery bubbles of music through ;  
And he coined me names of them, each in turn,  
Some comical name that I laughed to learn,  
Clean on down to the last and best,—  
The lively little man, never at rest,  
Who hides away at the end of the string,  
And tinkers and plays on everything,—  
That’s “The Little Man in the Tinshop” !

Raking a drum like a rattle of hail,  
Clinking a cymbal or castanet ;  
Chirping a twitter or sending a wail  
Through a piccolo that thrills me yet ;  
Reeling ripples of riotous bells,  
And tipsy tinkles of triangles—  
Wrangled and tangled in skeins of sound  
Till it seemed that my very soul spun round,  
As I leaned, in a breathless joy, toward my  
Radiant uncle, who snapped his eye  
And said, with the courtliest wave of his hand,  
“Why, that little master of all the band  
Is ‘The Little Man in the Tinshop’ !





“THE LITTLE MAN IN THE TINSHOP”

“And I’ve heard Verdi, the Wonderful,  
And Paganini, and Ole Bull,  
Mozart, Handel, and Mendelssohn,  
And fair Parepa, whose matchless tone  
Karl, her master, with magic bow,  
Blent with the angels’, and held her so  
Tranced till the rapturous Infinite—  
And I’ve heard arias, faint and low,  
From many an operatic light  
Glimmering on my swimming sight  
Dimmer and dimmer, until, at last,  
I still sit, holding my roses fast

For ‘The Little Man in the Tinshop.’ ”

Oho ! my Little Man, joy to you—  
And *yours*—and *theirs*—your lifetime through !  
Though *I’ve* heard melodies, boy and man,  
Since first “the show” of my life began,  
Never yet have I listened to  
Sadder, madder, or gladder glees  
Than your unharmonied harmonies ;  
For yours is the music that appeals  
To all the fervor the boy’s heart feels—  
All his glories, his wildest cheers,  
His bravest hopes, and his brightest tears ;  
And so, with his first bouquet, he kneels  
To “The Little Man in the Tinshop.”



### TOMMY SMITH

DIMPLE-cheeked and rosy-lipped,  
With his cap-rim backward tipped,  
Still in fancy I can see  
Little Tommy smile on me—  
Little Tommy Smith.

Little unsung Tommy Smith—  
Scarce a name to rhyme it with;  
Yet most tenderly to me  
Something sings unceasingly—  
Little Tommy Smith.

TOMMY SMITH

On the verge of some far land  
Still forever does he stand,  
With his cap-rim rakishly  
Tilted ; so he smiles on me—  
Little Tommy Smith.

Elder-blooms contrast the grace  
Of the rover's radiant face—  
Whistling back, in mimicry,  
“Old—Bob—White !” all liquidly—  
Little Tommy Smith.

O my jaunty statuette  
Of first love, I see you yet.  
Though you smile so mistily,  
It is but through tears I see,  
Little Tommy Smith.

But, with crown tipped back behind,  
And the glad hand of the wind  
Smoothing back your hair, I see  
Heaven's best angel smile on me,—  
Little Tommy Smith.

TOM VAN ARDEN

**T**OM VAN ARDEN, my old friend,  
Our warm fellowship is one  
Far too old to comprehend

Where its bond was first begun :  
Mirage-like before my gaze  
Gleams a land of other days,  
Where two truant boys, astray,  
Dream their lazy lives away.

There's a vision, in the guise  
Of Midsummer, where the Past  
Like a weary beggar lies  
In the shadow Time has cast ;  
And as blends the bloom of trees  
With the drowsy hum of bees,  
Fragrant thoughts and murmurs blend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

TOM VAN ARDEN

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
All the pleasures we have known  
Thrill me now as I extend  
This old hand and grasp your own—  
Feeling, in the rude caress,  
All affection's tenderness ;  
Feeling, though the touch be rough,  
Our old souls are soft enough.

So we'll make a mellow hour :  
Fill your pipe, and taste the wine—  
Warp your face, if it be sour,  
I can spare a smile from mine ;  
If it sharpen up your wit,  
Let me feel the edge of it—  
I have eager ears to lend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Are we “lucky dogs,” indeed ?  
Are we all that we pretend  
In the jolly life we lead ?—  
Bachelors, we must confess,  
Boast of “single blessedness”  
To the world, but not alone—  
Man's best sorrow is his own !

TOM VAN ARDEN

And the saddest truth is this,—  
Life to us has never proved  
What we tasted in the kiss  
Of the women we have loved:  
Vainly we congratulate  
Our escape from such a fate  
As their lying lips could send,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend!

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Hearts, like fruit upon the stem,  
Ripen sweetest, I contend,  
As the frost falls over them:  
Your regard for me to-day  
Makes November taste of May,  
And through every vein of rhyme  
Pours the blood of summer-time.

When our souls are cramped with youth  
Happiness seems far away  
In the future, while, in truth,  
We look back on it to-day  
Through our tears, nor dare to boast,—  
“Better to have loved and lost!”  
Broken hearts are hard to mend,  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

TOM VAN ARDEN

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
I grow prosy, and you tire;  
Fill the glasses while I bend  
To prod up the failing fire. . . .  
You are restless:—I presume  
There's a dampness in the room.—  
Much of warmth our nature begs,  
With rheumatics in our legs! . . .

Humph! the legs we used to fling  
Limber-jointed in the dance,  
When we heard the fiddle ring  
Up the curtain of Romance,  
And in crowded public halls  
Played with hearts like jugglers' balls.—  
*Feats of mountebanks, depend!*—  
Tom Van Arden, my old friend.

Tom Van Arden, my old friend,  
Pardon, then, this theme of mine:  
While the firelight leaps to lend  
Higher color to the wine,—  
I propose a health to those  
Who have *homes*, and home's repose,  
Wife- and child-love without end!  
. . . Tom Van Arden, my old friend.



## OUR OLD FRIEND NEVERFAIL

**O** IT'S good to ketch a relative 'at's richer and don't  
run

When you holler out to hold up, and'll joke and have his  
fun;

It's good to hear a man called bad and then find out he's  
not,

Er strike some chap they call lukewarm 'at's really red-  
hot;

OUR OLD FRIEND NEVERFAIL

It's good to know the Devil's painted jes' a leetle black,  
And it's good to have most anybody pat you on the  
back;—

But jes' the best thing in the world's our old friend  
Neverfail,

When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog wags his  
tail!

I like to strike the man I owe the same time I can pay,  
And take back things I've borried, and su'prise folks  
thataway;

I like to find out that the man I voted fer last fall,  
That didn't git elected, was a scoundrel after all;  
I like the man that likes the pore and he'ps 'em when he  
can;

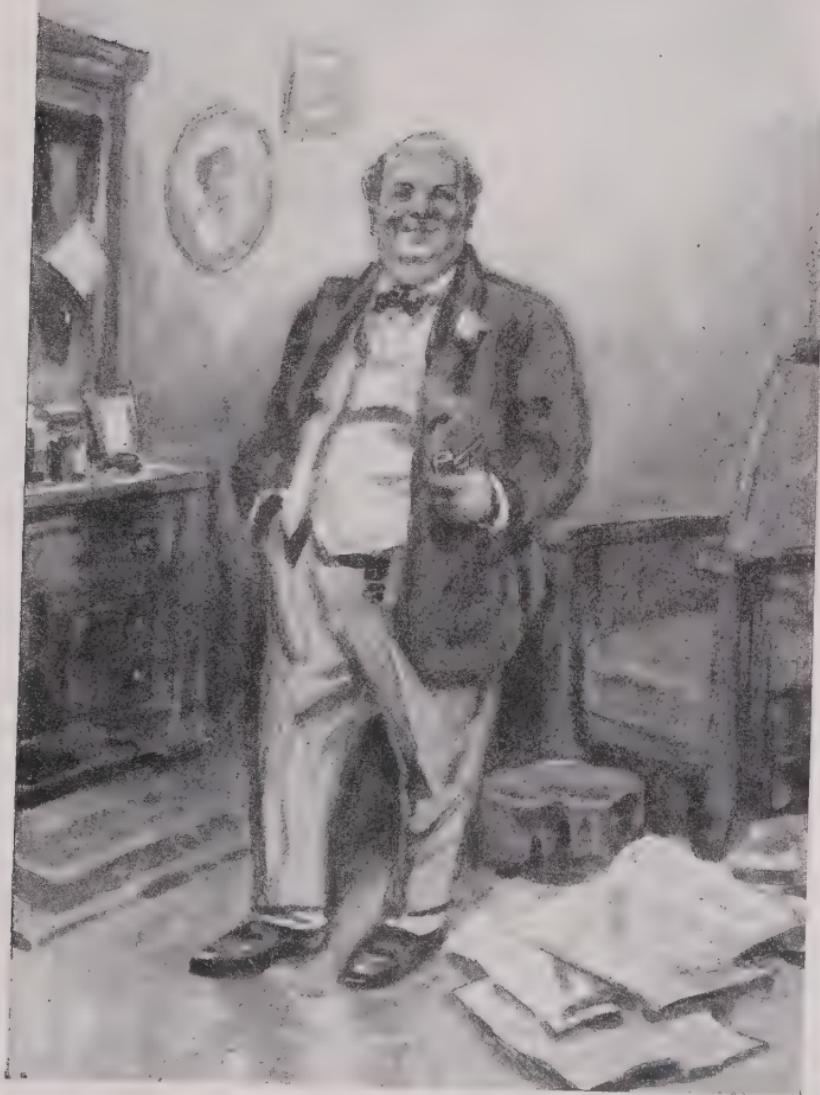
I like to meet a ragged tramp 'at's still a gentleman;  
But most I like—with you, my boy—our old friend  
Neverfail,

When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog wags  
his tail!

## MY BACHELOR CHUM

A CORPULENT man is my bachelor chum,  
With a neck apoplectic and thick—  
An abdomen on him as big as a drum,  
And a fist big enough for the stick ;  
With a walk that for grace is clear out of the case,  
And a wobble uncertain—as though  
His little bow-legs had forgotten the pace  
That in youth used to favor him so.

He is forty, at least ; and the top of his head  
Is a bald and a glittering thing ;  
And his nose and his two chubby cheeks are as red  
As three rival roses in spring ;





MY BACHELOR CHUM

His mouth is a grin with the corners tucked in,  
And his laugh is so breezy and bright  
That it ripples his features and dimples his chin  
With a billowy look of delight.

He is fond of declaring he “don’t care a straw”—  
That “the ills of a bachelor’s life  
Are blisses, compared with a mother-in-law  
And a boarding-school miss for a wife!”  
So he smokes and he drinks, and he jokes and he winks,  
And he dines and he wines, all alone,  
With a thumb ever ready to snap as he thinks  
Of the comforts he never has known.

But up in his den—(Ah, my bachelor chum!)—  
I have sat with him there in the gloom,  
When the laugh of his lips died away to become  
But a phantom of mirth in the room.  
And to look on him there you would love him, for all  
His ridiculous ways, and be dumb  
As the little girl-face that smiles down from the wall  
On the tears of my bachelor chum.



## ART AND POETRY

TO HOMER DAVENPORT

WESS 'e says, and sort o' grins,  
"Art and Poetry is twins!"

"Yit, if I'd my pick, I'd shake  
Poetry, and no mistake!"

"Pictures, allus, 'peared to *me*,  
Clean laid over Poetry!"

ART AND POETRY

“Let me *draw*, and then, i jings,  
I'll not keer a straw who sings.

“ ’F I could draw as you have drew,  
Like to jes’ swop pens with you !

“Picture-drawin’ ’s my pet vision  
Of Life-work in Lands Elysian.

“Pictures is first language we  
Find hacked out in History.

“Most delight we ever took  
Was in our first Picture-book.

“ ’Thout the funny picture-makers,  
They’d be lots more undertakers !

“Still, as I say, Rhymes and Art  
'Smighty hard to tell apart.

“Songs and pictures go together  
Same as birds and summer weather.”

So Wess says, and sort o’ grins,  
“Art and Poetry is twins.”



## DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

I' BE'N down to the Capital at Washington, D. C.,  
Where Congerss meets and passes on the pensions ort  
to be

Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence the  
war

Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how proud  
we are!

DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

Old Flukens, from our deestrick, jes' turned in and tuck  
and made

Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at I  
stayed

The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,  
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy--and I guess most folks agrees--  
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin' do jes' what they  
please;

A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congerssman and  
all,

And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his money  
square:

We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin' there;  
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and stayed  
and made

His millions; don't know what *I'm* worth untel my pen-  
sion's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try  
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas burnin' mighty nigh  
In ever' room about the house; and ever' night, about,  
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever' kind  
'at lives,

Injuns and all! and Senaters, and Ripresentatives;  
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses, I  
declare,

And even old men shamblin' round a-waltzin' with 'em  
there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes, 'way in some other  
room

Jes' chokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and per-  
fume;

And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and statutes,  
made

Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round there  
in the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with *me* to  
take a hand

And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you under-  
stand;

But when I said how tired I was, and made fer open air,  
He foller'd, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin' there.





DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

“My God!” says he—Fluke says to me, “I’m tireder’n you!

Don’t putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a chew.  
Set back a leetle furder in the shadder—that’ll do;  
I’m tireder’n you, old man; I’m tireder’n you.

“You see that-air old dome,” says he, “humped up ag’inst the sky?

It’s grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by and by,  
And then it stays jes’ thataway—jes’ anchored high and dry

Betwixt the sky up yender and the achin’ of yer eye.

“Night’s purty; not so purty, though, as what it ust to be  
When my first wife was livin’. You remember her?”  
says he.

I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, “I wonder now ef she  
Knows where I am—and what I am—and what I ust to  
be?

“That band in there!—I ust to think ’at music couldn’t  
wear

A feller out the way it does; but that ain’t music there—  
That’s jes’ a’ *imitation*, and like ever’thing, I swear,  
I hear, er see, er tetch, er taste, er tackle anywhere!

DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

“It’s all jes’ *artificial*, this-’ere high-priced life of ours;  
The theory, *it’s* sweet enough, tel it saps down and sours.  
They’s no *home* left, ner *ties o’ home* about it. By the  
powers,  
The whole thing’s *artificialer’n* *artificial* flowers!

“And all I want, and could lay down and *sob fer*, is to  
know

The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes’ to go  
And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that ’u’d rest  
me so,—

Jes’ set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke, you  
know.

“Jes’ set there, like I ust to do,” says Fluke, a-startin’ in,  
’Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to hisse’f ag’in;  
Then stopped and turned, and kind o’ coughed, and  
stooped and fumbled fer

Somepin’ o’ ’nuther in the grass—I guess his handker-  
cher.

Well, sence I’m back from Washington, where I left  
Fluke a-still  
A-leggin’ fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pension bill,  
I’ve half-way struck the notion, when I think o’ wealth  
and sich,  
They’s nothin’ much patheticker’n jes’ a-bein’ rich!







## OLD CHUMS

“**I**F I die first,” my old chum paused to say,  
“Mind! not a whimper of regret:—instead,  
Laugh and be glad, as I shall.—Being dead,  
I shall not lodge so very far away  
But that our mirth shall mingle.—So, the day  
The word comes, joy with me.” “I’ll try,” I said,  
Though, even speaking, sighed and shook my head  
And turned, with misted eyes. His roundelay  
Rang gaily on the stair; and then the door  
Opened and—closed. . . . Yet something of the  
clear,  
Hale hope, and force of wholesome faith he had  
Abided with me—strengthened more and more.—  
Then—then they brought his broken body here:  
And I laughed—whisperingly—and we were glad.



## SCOTTY

**S**COTTY'S dead.—Of course he is!  
Jes' that same old luck of his!—  
Ever sence we went cahoots  
He's be'n first, you bet yer boots!  
When our schoolin' first begun,  
Got two whippin's to my one:  
Stold and smoked the first cigar:  
Stood up first before the bar,  
Takin' whisky-straight—and me  
Wastin' time on "blackberry"!

SCOTTY

Beat me in the Army, too,  
And clean on the whole way through!—  
In more scrapes around the camp,  
And more troubles, on the tramp:  
Fought and fell there by my side  
With more bullets in his hide,  
And more glory in the cause,—  
That's the kind o' man *he* was!  
Luck liked Scotty more'n me.—  
*I* got married: Scotty, he  
Never even would *apply*  
Fer the pension-money I  
Had to beg of "Uncle Sam"—  
That's the kind o' cuss *I* am!—  
Scotty allus first and best—  
Me the last and ornriest!  
Yit fer all that's said and done—  
All the battles fought and won—  
We hain't prospered, him ner me—  
Both as pore as pore could be,—  
Though we've allus, up tel now,  
Stuck together anyhow—  
Scotty allus, as I've said,  
Luckiest—And now he's *dead*!



### THE OLD MAN

O! steadfast and serene,  
In patient pause between  
The seen and the unseen,  
What gentle zephyrs fan  
Your silken silver hair,—  
And what diviner air  
Breathes round you like a prayer,  
Old Man?

THE OLD MAN

Can you, in nearer view  
Of Glory, pierce the blue  
Of happy Heaven through;  
And, listening mutely, can  
Your senses, dull to us,  
Hear Angel-voices thus,  
In chorus glorious—  
Old Man?

In your reposed gaze  
The dusk of Autumn days  
Is blent with April haze,  
As when of old began  
The bursting of the bud  
Of rosy babyhood—  
When all the world was good,  
Old Man.

And yet I find a sly  
Little twinkle in your eye;  
And your whisperingly shy  
Little laugh is simply an  
Internal shout of glee  
That betrays the fallacy  
You'd perpetrate on me,  
Old Man.

THE OLD MAN

So just put up the frown  
That your brows are pulling down!  
Why, the fleetest boy in town,

As he bared his feet and ran,  
Could read with half a glance—  
And of keen rebuke, perchance—  
Your secret countenance,

Old Man.

Now, honestly, confess:  
Is an old man any less  
Than the little child we bless

And caress when we can?  
Isn't age but just a place  
Where you mask the childish face  
To preserve its inner grace,

Old Man?

Hasn't age a truant day,  
Just as that you went astray  
In the wayward, restless way,

When, brown with dust and tan,  
Your roguish face essayed,  
In solemn masquerade,  
To hide the smile it made,

Old Man?





THE OLD MAN

Now, fair, and square, and true,  
Don't your old soul tremble through,  
As in youth it used to do

When it brimmed and overran  
With the strange, enchanted sights,  
And the splendors and delights  
Of the old "Arabian Nights,"  
Old Man?

When, haply, you have fared  
Where glad Aladdin shared  
His lamp with you, and dared

The Afrite and his clan;  
And, with him, clambered through  
The trees where jewels grew—  
And filled your pockets, too,

Old Man?

Or, with Sinbad, at sea—  
And in veracity  
Who has sinned as bad as he,

Or would, or will, or can?—  
Have you listened to his lies,  
With open mouth and eyes,  
And learned his art likewise,

Old Man?

THE OLD MAN

And you need not deny  
That your eyes were wet as dry,  
Reading novels on the sly!

And review them, if you can  
And the same warm tears will fall—  
Only faster, that is all—  
Over Little Nell and Paul,  
Old Man!

Oh, you were a lucky lad—  
Just as good as you were bad!  
And the host of friends you had—

Charley, Tom, and Dick, and Dan;  
And the old School-Teacher, too,  
Though he often censured you;  
And the girls in pink and blue,  
Old Man.

And—as often you have leant,  
In boyish sentiment,  
To kiss the letter sent

By Nelly, Belle, or Nan—  
Wherein the rose's hue  
Was red, the violet blue—  
And sugar sweet—and you,  
Old Man,—

THE OLD MAN

So, to-day, as lives the bloom,  
And the sweetness, and perfume  
Of the blossoms, I assume,

On the same mysterious plan  
The Master's love assures,  
That the selfsame boy endures  
In that hale old heart of yours,  
Old Man.



JAMES B. MAYNARD

HIS daily, nightly task is o'er—  
He leans above his desk no more.

His pencil and his pen say not  
One further word of gracious thought.

All silent is his *voice*, yet clear  
For all a grateful world to hear;

He poured abroad his human love  
In opulence unmeasured of—

While, in return, his meek demand,—  
The warm clasp of a neighbor-hand

In recognition of the true  
World's duty that he lived to do.

So was he kin of yours and mine—  
So, even by the hallowed sign

Of silence which he listens to,  
He hears our tears as falls the dew.



## THE ANCIENT PRINTERMAN

“O PRINTERMAN of sallow face,  
 And look of absent guile,  
 Is it the ‘copy’ on your ‘case’  
 That causes you to smile?  
 Or is it some old treasure scrap  
 You call from Memory’s file?

“I fain would guess its mystery—  
 For often I can trace  
 A fellow dreamer’s history  
 Whene’er it haunts the face;  
 Your fancy’s running riot  
 In a retrospective race!

“Ah, Printer, you’re straying  
Afar from ‘stick’ and type—  
Your heart has ‘gone a-maying,’  
And you taste old kisses, ripe  
Again on lips that pucker  
At your old asthmatic pipe!

“You are dreaming of old pleasures  
That have faded from your view;  
And the music-burdened measures  
Of the laughs you listen to  
Are now but angel-echoes—  
O, have I spoken true?”

The ancient Printer hinted  
With a motion full of grace  
To where the words were printed  
On a card above his “case,”—  
“I am deaf and dumb!” I left him  
With a smile upon his face.







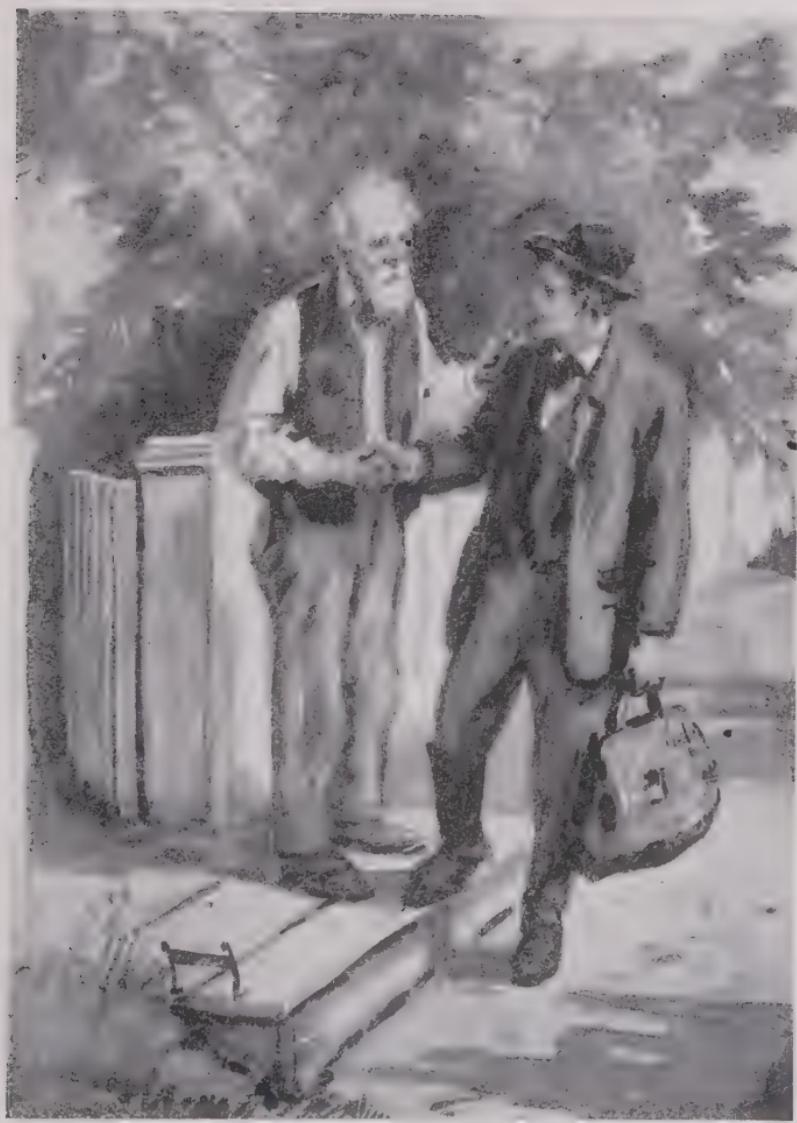
## THE OLD MAN AND JIM

OLD man never had much to say—  
'Ceptin' to Jim,—  
And Jim was the wildest boy he had—  
    And the old man jes' wrapped up in him !  
Never heerd him speak but once  
Er twice in my life,—and first time was  
When the army broke out, and Jim he went,  
The old man backin' him, fer three months ;  
And all 'at I heerd the old man say  
Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—  
    "Well, good-by, Jim :  
    Take keer of yourse'f!"

THE OLD MAN AND JIM

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied  
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim  
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see?—  
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!  
And over and over I mind the day  
The old man come and stood round in the way  
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—  
And down at the deepo a-heerin' him say,  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"

Never was nothin' about the *farm*  
Disting'ished Jim;  
Neighbors all ust to wonder why  
The old man 'peared wrapped up in him:  
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back  
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had  
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,  
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad—  
'At he had led, with a bullet clean  
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag  
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen,—  
The old man wound up a letter to him  
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said: "Tell Jim  
Good-by,  
And take keer of hisse'f."





THE OLD MAN AND JIM

Jim come home' jes' long enough  
To take the whim  
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery—  
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!  
Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,  
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more.  
And the old man give him a colt he'd raised,  
And foller'd him over to Camp Ben Wade,  
And laid around fer a week er so,  
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—  
Tel finally he rid away,  
And last he heerd was the old man say,—  
"Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!"



THE OLD MAN AND JIM

Tuk the papers, the old man did,  
A-watchin' fer Jim—  
Fully believin' he'd make his mark  
*Some* way—jes' wrapped up in him!—  
And many a time the word 'u'd come  
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—  
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where  
Jim rid right into their cannons there,  
And *tuk* 'em, and p'nted 'em t'other way,  
And socked it home to the boys in gray  
As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—  
Jim a lieutenant, and one arm gone,  
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—  
“Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse'f!”



THE OLD MAN AND JIM

Think of a private, now, perhaps,  
We'll say like Jim,  
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—  
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him !  
Think of him—with the war plum' through,  
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue  
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,  
And the old man, bendin' over him—  
The surgeon turnin' away with tears  
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,  
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to  
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—  
"Well, good-by, Jim :  
Take keer of yourse'f!"





## THE OLD SCHOOL-CHUM

**H**E puts the poem by, to say  
His eyes are not themselves to-day!

A sudden glamour o'er his sight—  
A something vague, indefinite—

An oft-recurring blur that blinds  
The printed meaning of the lines,

And leaves the mind all dusk and dim  
In swimming darkness—strange to him!

THE OLD SCHOOL-CHUM

It is not childishness, I guess,—  
Yet something of the tenderness

That used to wet his lashes when  
A boy seems troubling him again;—

The old emotion, sweet and wild,  
That drove him truant when a child,

That he might hide the tears that fell  
Above the lesson—"Little Nell."

And so it is he puts aside  
The poem he has vainly tried

To follow; and, as one who sighs  
In failure, through a poor disguise

Of smiles, he dries his tears, to say  
His eyes are not themselves to-day.





### MY JOLLY FRIEND'S SECRET

A H, friend of mine, how goes it  
Since you've taken you a mate?—  
Your smile, though, plainly shows it  
Is a very happy state!  
Dan Cupid's necromancy!  
You must sit you down and dine,  
And lubricate your fancy  
With a glass or two of wine.





MY JOLLY FRIEND'S SECRET

And as you have “deserted,”  
As my other chums have done,  
While I laugh alone diverted,  
As you drop off one by one—  
And I’ve remained unwedded,  
Till—you see—look here—that I’m,  
In a manner, “snatched bald-headed”  
By the sportive hand of Time!

I’m an “old ’un!” yes, but wrinkles  
Are not so plenty, quite,  
As to cover up the twinkles  
Of the *boy*—ain’t I right?  
Yet there are ghosts of kisses  
Under this mustache of mine  
My mem’ry only misses  
When I drown ’em out with wine.

From acknowledgment so ample,  
You would hardly take me for  
What I am—a perfect sample  
Of a “jolly bachelor”;  
Not a bachelor has being  
When he laughs at married life  
But his heart and soul’s agreeing  
That he ought to have a wife!

MY JOLLY FRIEND'S SECRET

Ah, ha ! old chum, this claret,  
Like Fatima, holds the key  
Of the old Blue-Beardish garret  
Of my hidden mystery !  
Did you say you'd like to listen ?  
Ah, my boy ! the "*Sad No More!*"  
And the tear-drops that will glisten—  
*Turn the catch upon the door,*

And sit you down beside me  
And put yourself at ease—  
I'll trouble you to slide me  
That wine decanter, please ;  
The path is kind o' mazy  
Where my fancies have to go,  
And my heart gets sort o' lazy  
On the journey—don't you know ?

Let me see—when I was twenty—  
It's a lordly age, my boy,  
When a fellow's money's plenty,  
And the leisure to enjoy—

MY JOLLY FRIEND'S SECRET

And a girl—with hair as golden  
As—that; and lips—well—quite  
As red as *this* I'm holdin'  
Between you and the light?

And eyes and a complexion—  
Ah, heavens!—le'-me-see—  
Well,—just in this connection,—  
*Did you lock that door for me?*  
Did I start in recitation  
My past life to recall?  
Well, *that's* an indication  
I am purty tight—that's all!



## IN THE HEART OF JUNE

In the heart of June, love,  
    You and I together,  
On from dawn till noon, love,  
    Laughing with the weather;  
Blending both our souls, love,  
    In the selfsame tune,  
Drinking all life holds, love,  
    In the heart of June.

In the heart of June, love,  
    With its golden weather,  
Underneath the moon, love,  
    You and I together.  
Ah! how sweet to seem, love,  
    Drugged and half aswoon  
With this luscious dream, love,  
    In the heart of June.



## THE OLD BAND

IT'S mighty good to git back to the old town, shore,  
Considerin' I've be'n away twenty year and more.  
Sence I moved then to Kansas, of course I see a change,  
A-comin' back, and notice things that's new to me and  
strange;  
Especially at evening when yer new band-fellers meet,  
In fancy uniforms and all, and play out on the street—  
. . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey and the Sax-  
horn fellers—say?  
I want to hear the *old* band play.

THE OLD BAND

What's come of Eastman, and Nat Snow? And where's  
War Barnett at?

And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart; Tom Richa'son  
and that-

Air brother of him played the drum as twic't as big as  
Jim;

And old Hi Kerns, the carpenter—say, what's become o'  
him?

I make no doubt yer *new band* now's a *competenter* band,  
And plays their music more by note than what they play  
by hand,

And stylicher and grander tunes; but somehow—*anyway*,  
I want to hear the *old* band play.

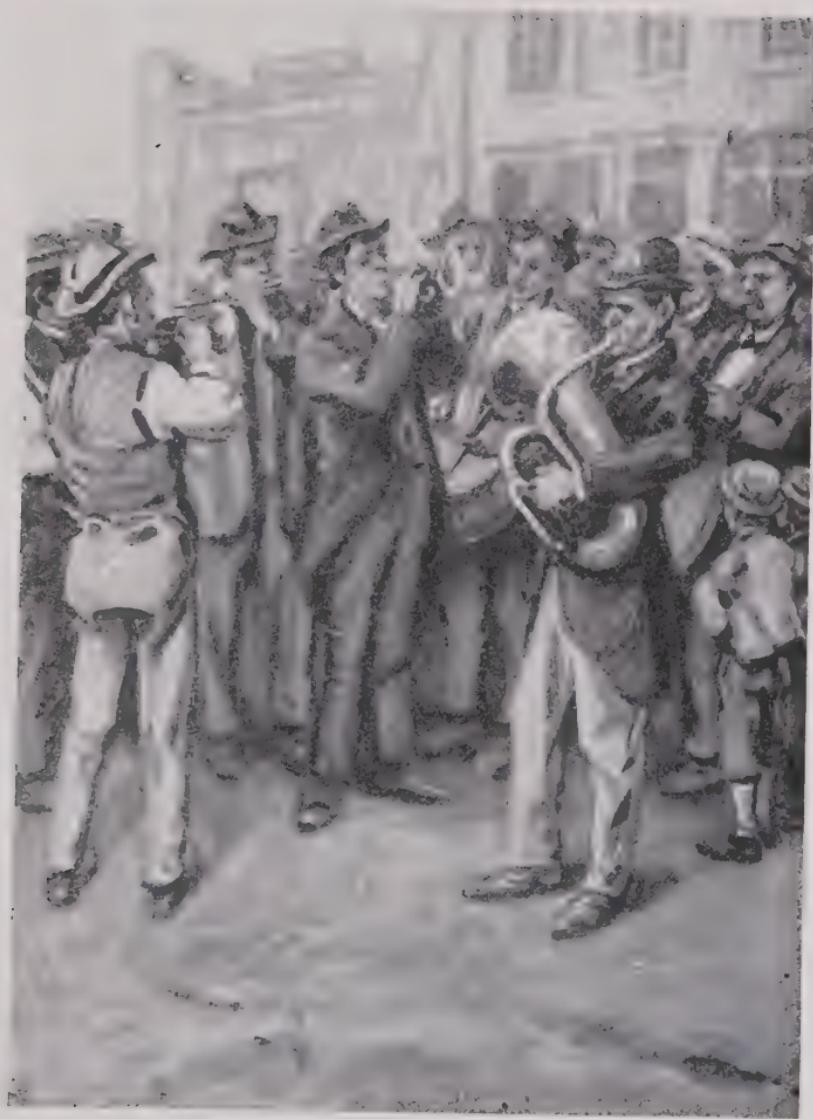
Sich tunes as “John Brown's Body” and “Sweet Alice,”  
don't you know;

And “The Camels is A-comin'” and “John Anderson, my  
Jo”;

And a dozen others of 'em—“Number Nine” and “Num-  
ber 'Leven”

Was favo-*rites* that fairly made a feller dream o' Heaven.  
And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've laid so still in bed  
I've even heerd the locus'-blossoms droppin' on the shed  
When “Lilly Dale,” er “Hazel Dell,” had sobbed and died  
away—

. . . I want to hear the *old* band play.





THE OLD BAND

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the *old band's* what I  
said—

It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with somepin' in my  
head;

And, whilste I'm no musicianer, when my blame' eyes is  
jes'

Nigh drownded out, and Mem'ry squares her jaws and  
sort o' says

She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want to jes' turn in  
And take and light right out o' here and git back West  
ag'in

And *stay* there, when I git there, where I never haf' to  
say

I want to hear the *old* band play.





## MY FRIEND

“**H**E is my friend,” I said,—  
“Be patient!” Overhead  
The skies were drear and dim;  
And lo! the thought of him  
Smiled on my heart—and then  
The sun shone out again!

“He is my friend!” The words  
Brought summer and the birds;  
And all my winter-time  
Thawed into running rhyme  
And rippled into song,  
Warm, tender, brave, and strong.

MY FRIEND

And so it sings to-day.—  
So may it sing alway!  
Though waving grasses grow  
Between, and lilies blow  
Their trills of perfume clear  
As laughter to the ear,  
Let each mute measure end  
With “Still he is thy friend.”





## THE TRAVELING MAN

### I

COULD I pour out the nectar the gods only can,  
I would fill up my glass to the brim  
And drink the success of the Traveling Man,  
And the house represented by him;  
And could I but tincture the glorious draught  
With his smiles, as I drank to him then,  
And the jokes he has told and the laughs he has laughed,  
I would fill up the goblet again—

And drink to the sweetheart who gave him good-by  
With a tenderness thrilling him this  
Very hour, as he thinks of the tear in her eye  
That salted the sweet of her kiss;  
To her truest of hearts and her fairest of hands  
I would drink, with all serious prayers,  
Since the heart she must trust is a Traveling Man's,  
And as warm as the ulster he wears.





THE TRAVELING MAN

II

I would drink to the wife, with the babe on her knee,  
Who awaits his returning in vain—  
Who breaks his brave letters so tremulously  
And reads them again and again !  
And I'd drink to the feeble old mother who sits  
At the warm fireside of her son  
And murmur and weeps o'er the stocking she knits,  
As she thinks of the wandering one.

I would drink a long life and a health to the friends  
Who have met him with smiles and with cheer—  
To the generous hand that the landlord extends  
To the wayfarer journeying here:  
And I pledge, when he turns from this earthly abode  
And pays the last fare that he can,  
Mine Host of the Inn at the End of the Road  
Will welcome the Traveling Man !



### DAN O'SULLIVAN

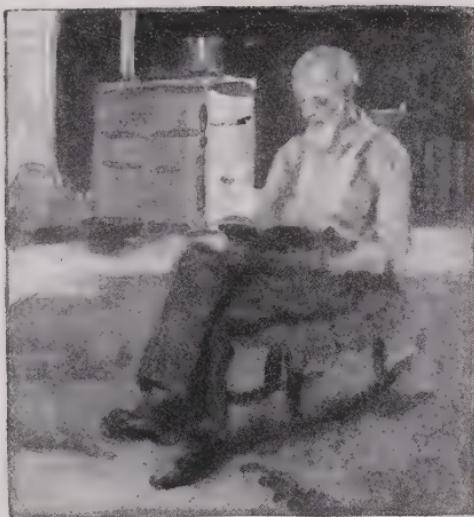
DAN O'SULLIVAN: It's your  
Lips have kissed "The Blarney," sure!—  
To be trillin' praise av me,  
Dhrippin' swhate wid poethry!—  
Not that I'd not have ye sing—  
Don't lave off for anything—  
Jusht be aisy whilst the fit  
Av me head shwells up to it!

Dade and thrue, I'm not the man,  
Whilst yer singin', loike ye can,  
To cry shtop because ye've 'blesht  
My songs more than all the resht:—  
I'll not be the b'y to ax  
Any shtar to wane or wax,  
Or ax any clock that's woun'  
To run up inshtid av down!

DAN O'SULLIVAN

Whist yez! Dan O'Sullivan!—  
Him that made the Irishman  
Mixt the birds in wid the dough,  
And the dew and mistletoe  
Wid the whusky in the quare  
Muggs av us—and here we air,  
Three parts right, and three parts wrong,  
Shpiked with beauty, wit and song!





### MY OLD FRIEND

YOU'VE a manner all so mellow,  
My old friend,  
That it cheers and warms a fellow,  
My old friend,  
Just to meet and greet you, and  
Feel the pressure of a hand  
That one may understand,  
My old friend.

MY OLD FRIEND

Though dimmed in youthful splendor,

    My old friend,

Your smiles are still as tender,

    My old friend,

And your eyes as true a blue

As your childhood ever knew,

And your laugh as merry, too,

    My old friend.

For though your hair is faded,

    My old friend,

And your step a trifle jaded,

    My old friend,

Old Time, with all his lures

In the trophies he secures,

Leaves young that heart of yours,

    My old friend.

And so it is you cheer me,

    My old friend,

For to know you still are near me,

    My old friend,

Makes my hopes of clearer light,

And my faith of surer sight,

And my soul a purer white,

    My old friend.



## OLD JOHN HENRY

OLD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff—  
Old John Henry—

He's tough, I reckon,—but none too tough—  
Too tough though's better than not enough!

Says old John Henry.

He does his best, and when his best's bad,  
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad—  
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:

Old John Henry!





OLD JOHN HENRY

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand—

Old John Henry—

A smilin' face and a hearty hand

'S religen 'at all folks understand,

Says old John Henry.

He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,

And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,

And his hair hain't cut—but his eye-teeth is:

Old John Henry!

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed—

Old John Henry—

And sleeps like a babe when he goes to bed—

And dreams o' Heaven and home-made bread,

Says old John Henry.

He hain't refined as he'd ort to be

To fit the statutes o' poetry,

Ner his clothes don't fit him—but *he* fits *me*:

Old John Henry!

## HER VALENTINE

**S**OMEBODY'S sent a funny little valentine to me.  
It's a bunch of baby-roses in a vase of filigree,  
And hovering above them—just as cute as he can be—  
Is a fairy Cupid tangled in a scarf of poetry.

And the prankish little fellow looks so knowing in his  
glee,  
With his golden bow and arrow, aiming most unerringly  
At a pair of hearts so labeled that I may read and see  
That one is meant for “One Who Loves,” and one is  
meant for me.

But I know the lad who sent it! It's as plain as A-B-C!—  
For the roses they are *blushing*, and the vase stands *awkwardly*,  
And the little god above it—though as cute as he can be—  
Can not breathe the lightest whisper of his burning love  
for me.



## CHRISTMAS GREETING

A WORD of Godspeed and good cheer  
To all on earth, or far or near,  
Or friend or foe, or thine or mine—  
In echo of the voice divine,  
Heard when the star bloomed forth and lit  
The world's face, with God's smile on it.



### ABE MARTIN

**A** BE MARTIN!—dad-burn his old picture!  
P'tends he's a Brown County fixture—  
A kind of a comical mixture  
    Of hoss-sense and no sense at all!  
His mouth, like his pipe, 's allus goin',  
And his thoughts, like his whiskers, is flowin',  
And what he don't know ain't wuth knowin'—  
    From Genesis clean to baseball!





ABE MARTIN

The artist, Kin Hubbard, 's so keerless  
He draws Abe 'most eyeless and earless,  
But he's never yet pictured him cheerless

Er with fun 'at he tries to conceal,—  
Whuther on to the fence er clean over  
A-rootin' up ragweed er clover,  
Skeert stiff at some "Rambler" er "Rover"  
Er newfangled automobeel!

It's a purty steep climate old Brown's in;  
And the rains there his ducks nearly drowns in  
The old man hisse'f wades his rounds in

As ca'm and serene, mighty nigh  
As the old handsaw-hawg, er the mottled  
Milch cow, er the old rooster wattled  
Like the mumps had him 'most so well throttled  
That it was a pleasure to die.

But best of 'em all's the fool-breaks 'at  
Abe don't see at all, and yit makes 'at  
Both me and you lays back and shakes at

His comic, miraculous cracks  
Which makes him—clean back of the power  
Of genius itse'f in its flower—  
This Notable Man of the Hour,  
Abe Martin, The Joker on Facts.



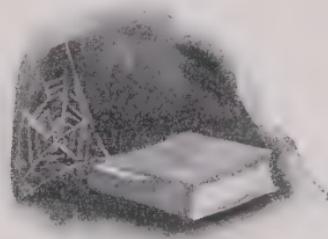
## THE LITTLE OLD POEM THAT NOBODY READS

THE little old poem that nobody reads  
Blooms in a crowded space,  
Like a ground-vine blossom, so low in the weeds  
That nobody sees its face—  
Unless, perchance, the reader's eye  
Stares through a yawn, and hurries by,  
For no one wants, or loves, or heeds,  
The little old poem that nobody reads.

THE LITTLE OLD POEM THAT NOBODY READS

The little old poem that nobody reads  
Was written—where?—and when?  
Maybe a hand of goodly deeds  
Thrilled as it held the pen:  
Maybe the fountain whence it came  
Was a heart brimmed o'er with tears of shame,  
And maybe its creed is the worst of creeds—  
The little old poem that nobody reads.

But, little old poem that nobody reads,  
Holding you here above  
The wound of a heart that warmly bleeds  
For all that knows not love,  
I well believe if the old World knew  
As dear a friend as I find in you,  
That friend would tell it that all it needs  
Is the little old poem that nobody reads.





## IN THE AFTERNOON

YOU in the hammock ; and I, near by,  
Was trying to read, and to swing you, too ;  
And the green of the sward was so kind to the eye,  
And the shade of the maples so cool and blue,  
That often I looked from the book to you  
To say as much, with a sigh.

You in the hammock. The book we'd brought  
From the parlor—to read in the open air,—  
Something of love and of Launcelot  
And Guinevere, I believe, was there—  
But the afternoon, it was far more fair  
Than the poem was, I thought.





IN THE AFTERNOON

You in the hammock ; and on and on

I droned and droned through the rhythmic stuff—  
But, with always a half of my vision gone  
Over the top of the page—enough  
To caressingly gaze at you, swathed in the fluff  
Of your hair and your odorous “lawn.”

You in the hammock—and that was a year—

Fully a year ago, I guess—  
And what do we care for their Guinevere  
And her Launcelot and their lordliness!—  
You in the hammock still, and—Yes—  
Kiss me again, my dear!



## BECAUSE

WHY did we meet long years of yore?  
And why did we strike hands and say:  
"We will be friends and nothing more";  
Why are we musing thus to-day?  
Because because was just because,  
And no one knew just why it was.

Why did I say good-by to you?  
Why did I sail across the main?  
Why did I love not heaven's own blue  
Until I touched these shores again?  
Because because was just because,  
And you nor I knew why it was.

Why are my arms about you now,  
And happy tears upon your cheek?  
And why my kisses on your brow?  
Look up in thankfulness and speak!  
Because because was just because,  
And only God knew why it was.



## HERR WEISER

HERR WEISER!—Threescore years and ten,—  
A hale white rose of his countrymen,  
Transplanted here in the Hoosier loam,  
And blossomy as his German home—  
As blossomy and as pure and sweet  
As the cool green glen of his calm retreat,  
Far withdrawn from the noisy town  
Where trade goes clamoring up and down,  
Whose fret and fever, and stress and strife,  
May not trouble his tranquil life!

Breath of rest, what a balmy gust!—  
Quit of the city's heat and dust,  
Jostling down by the winding road  
Through the orchard ways of his quaint abode.—  
Tether the horse, as we onward fare  
Under the pear trees trailing there,  
And thumping the wooden bridge at night  
With lumps of ripeness and lush delight,  
Till the stream, as it maunders on till dawn,  
Is powdered and pelted and smiled upon.

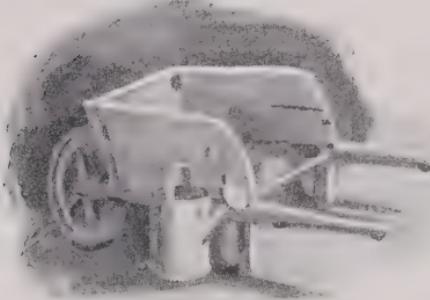
Herr Weiser, with his wholesome face,  
And the gentle blue of his eyes, and grace  
Of unassuming honesty,  
Be there to welcome you and me!  
And what though the toil of the farm be stopped  
And the tireless plans of the place be dropped,  
While the prayerful master's knees are set  
In beds of pansy and mignonette  
And lily and aster and columbine,  
Offered in love, as yours and mine?—





HERR WEISER

What, but a blessing of kindly thought,  
Sweet as the breath of forget-me-not!—  
What, but a spirit of lustrous love  
White as the aster he bends above!—  
What, but an odorous memory  
Of the dear old man, made known to me  
In days demanding a help like his,—  
As sweet as the life of the lily is—  
As sweet as the soul of a babe, bloom-wise  
Born of a lily in Paradise.





### A MOTHER-SONG

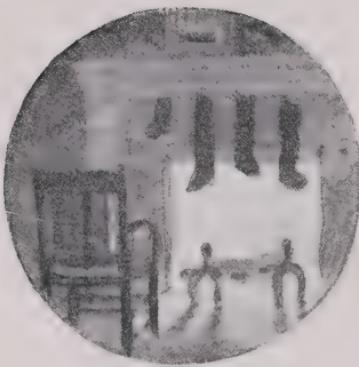
MOTHER, O mother! forever I cry for you,  
Sing the old song I may never forget;  
Even in slumber I murmur and sigh for you.—  
Mother, O mother,  
Sing low, “Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!”

A MOTHER-SONG

Mother, O mother! the years are so lonely,  
Filled but with weariness, doubt and regret!  
Can't you come back to me—for to-night only,  
Mother, my mother,  
And sing, "Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! of old I had never  
One wish denied me, nor trouble to fret;  
Now—must I cry out all vainly forever,—  
Mother, sweet mother,  
O sing, "Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! must longing and sorrow  
Leave me in darkness, with eyes ever wet,  
And never the hope of a meeting to-morrow?  
Answer me, mother,  
And sing, "Little brother,  
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"



## WHAT "OLD SANTA" OVERHEARD

*'T*IS said old Santa Claus one time  
Told this joke on himself in rhyme:  
One Christmas, in the early din  
That ever leads the morning in,  
I heard the happy children shout  
In rapture at the toys turned out  
Of bulging little socks and shoes—  
A joy at which I could but choose  
To listen enviously, because  
I'm always just "Old Santa Claus,"—  
But ere my rising sigh had got  
To its first quaver at the thought,  
It broke in laughter, as I heard  
A little voice chirp like a bird,—

WHAT "OLD SANTA" OVERHEARD

"Old Santa's mighty good, I know,  
And awful rich—and he can go  
Down ever' chimbly anywhere  
In all the world!—But I don't care,  
*I* wouldn't trade with *him*, and be  
Old Santa Clause, and him be me,  
Fer all his toys and things!—and *I*  
Know why, and bet you *he* knows why!—  
They *wuz* no Santa Clause when *he*  
Wuz ist a little boy like me!"

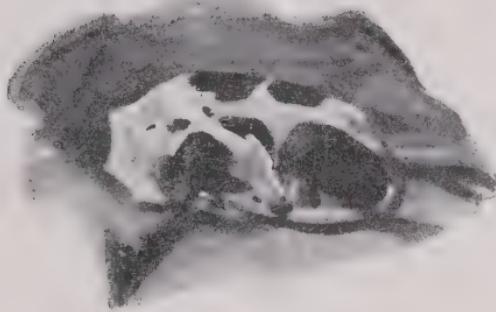


## THE STEPMOTHER

FIRST she come to our house,  
Tommy run and hid;  
And Emily and Bob and me  
We cried jus' like we did  
When Mother died,—and we all said  
'At we all wisht 'at we was dead!

And Nurse she couldn't stop us;  
And Pa he tried and tried,—  
We sobbed and shook and wouldn't look,  
But only cried and cried;  
And nen some one—we couldn't jus'  
Tell who—was cryin' same as us!

Our Stepmother! Yes, it was her,  
Her arms around us all—  
'Cause Tom slid down the banister  
And peeked in from the hall.—  
And we all love her, too, because  
She's purt' nigh good as Mother was!



## WHEN OLD JACK DIED

**W**HEN Old Jack died, we stayed from school  
(they said,

At home, we needn't go that day), and none  
Of us ate any breakfast—only one,  
And that was Papa—and his eyes were red  
When he came round where we were, by the shed  
Where Jack was lying, half-way in the sun  
And half-way in the shade. When we begun  
To cry out loud, Pa turned and dropped his head.  
And went away; and Mamma, she went back  
Into the kitchen. Then, for a long while,  
All to ourselves, like, we stood there and cried.  
We thought so many good things of Old Jack,  
And funny things—although we didn't smile—  
We couldn't only cry when Old Jack died.

When Old Jack died, it seemed a human friend  
Had suddenly gone from us ; that some face  
That we had loved to fondle and embrace  
From babyhood, no more would condescend  
To smile on us forever. We might bend  
With tearful eyes above him, interlace  
Our chubby fingers o'er him, romp and race,  
Plead with him, call and coax—aye, we might send  
The old halloo up for him, whistle, hist,  
(If sobs had let us) or, as wildly vain,  
Snapped thumbs, called “Speak,” and he had not re-  
plied ;  
We might have gone down on our knees and kissed  
The tousled ears, and yet they must remain  
Deaf, motionless, we knew—when Old Jack died.





### WHEN OLD JACK DIED

When Old Jack died, it seemed to us, some way,  
That all the other dogs in town were pained  
With our bereavement, and some that were chained,  
Even, unslipped their collars on that day  
To visit Jack in state, as though to pay  
A last, sad tribute there, while neighbors craned  
Their heads above the high board fence, and deigned  
To sigh "Poor Dog!" remembering how they  
Had cuffed him, when alive, perchance, because,  
For love of them he leaped to lick their hands—  
Now, that he could not, were they satisfied?  
We children thought that, as we crossed his paws,  
And o'er his grave, 'way down the bottom-lands,  
Wrote "Our First Love Lies Here," when Old Jack  
died.





### THAT NIGHT

YOU and I, and that night, with its perfume and  
glory!—

The scent of the locusts—the light of the moon;  
And the violin weaving the waltzers a story,  
Enmeshing their feet in the weft of the tune,  
Till their shadows uncertain  
Reeled round on the curtain,  
While under the trellis we drank in the June.

THAT NIGHT

Soaked through with the midnight the cedars were sleeping,

Their shadowy tresses outlined in the bright  
Crystal, moon-smitten mists, where the fountain's heart,  
leaping

Forever, forever burst, full with delight;

And its lisp on my spirit

Fell faint as that near it

Whose love like a lily bloomed out in the night.

O your glove was an odorous sachet of blisses !

The breath of your fan was a breeze from Cathay !

And the rose at your throat was a nest of spilled kisses !—

And the music !—in fancy I hear it to-day,

As I sit here, confessing

Our secret, and blessing

My rival who found us, and waltzed you away.





## TO ALMON KEEFER

INSCRIBED IN "TALES OF THE OCEAN"

**T**HIS first book that I ever knew  
Was read aloud to me by you—  
Friend of my boyhood, therefore take  
It back from me, for old times' sake—  
The selfsame "Tales" first read to me,  
Under "the old sweet apple tree,"  
Ere I myself could read such great  
Big words,—but listening all elate,  
At your interpreting, until  
Brain, heart and soul were all athrill  
With wonder, awe, and sheer excess  
Of wildest childish happiness.





TO ALMON KEEFER

So take the book again—forget  
All else,—long years, lost hopes, regret;  
Sighs for the joys we ne'er attain,  
Prayers we have lifted all in vain;  
Tears for the faces seen no more,  
Once as the roses at the door!  
Take the enchanted book—And lo,  
On grassy swards of long ago,  
Sprawl out again, beneath the shade  
The breezy old-home orchard made,  
The veriest barefoot boy indeed—  
And I will listen as you read.





## TO THE QUIET OBSERVER

AFTER HIS LONG SILENCE

DEAR old friend of us all in need  
Who know the worth of a friend indeed,  
How rejoiced are we all to learn  
Of your glad return.

TO THE QUIET OBSERVER

We who have missed your voice so long—  
Even as March might miss the song  
Of the sugar-bird in the maples when  
They're tapped again.

Even as the memory of these  
*Blended* sweets,—the sap of the trees  
And the song of the birds, and the old camp too,  
We think of you.

Hail to you, then, with welcomes deep  
As grateful hearts may laugh or weep!—  
You give us not only the bird that sings,  
But all good things.





## REACH YOUR HAND TO ME

REACH your hand to me, my friend,  
With its heartiest caress—  
Sometime there will come an end  
To its present faithfulness—  
Sometime I may ask in vain  
For the touch of it again,  
When between us land or sea  
Holds it ever back from me.





REACH YOUR HAND TO ME

Sometime I may need it so,  
Groping somewhere in the night,  
It will seem to me as though  
Just a touch, however light,  
Would make all the darkness day,  
And along some sunny way  
Lead me through an April-shower  
Of my tears to this fair hour.

O the present is too sweet  
To go on forever thus!  
Round the corner of the street  
Who can say what waits for us?—  
Meeting—greeting, night and day,  
Faring each the selfsame way—  
Still somewhere the path must end—  
Reach your hand to me, my friend!





## THE DEAD JOKE AND THE FUNNY MAN

LONG years ago, a funny man,  
Flushed with a strange delight,  
Sat down and wrote a funny thing  
All in the solemn night;  
And as he wrote he clapped his hands  
And laughed with all his might.  
For it was such a funny thing,  
O, such a very funny thing,  
This wonderfully funny thing,  
He  
Laughed  
Outright.

THE DEAD JOKE AND THE FUNNY MAN

And so it was this funny man  
Printed this funny thing—  
Forgot it, too, nor ever thought  
It worth remembering,  
Till but a day or two ago.  
(Ah! what may changes bring!)

He found this selfsame funny thing  
In an exchange—“O, funny thing!”  
He cried, “You dear old funny thing!”  
And  
Sobbed  
Outright.





## AMERICA'S THANKSGIVING

1900

FATHER all bountiful, in mercy bear  
With this our universal voice of prayer—  
    The voice that needs must be  
    Upraised in thanks to Thee,  
O Father, from Thy children everywhere.

A multitudinous voice, wherein we fain  
Wouldst have Thee hear no lightest sob of pain—  
    No murmur of distress,  
    Nor moan of loneliness,  
Nor drip of tears, though soft as summer rain.

And, Father, give us first to comprehend,  
No ill can come from Thee ; lean Thou and lend  
    Us clearer sight to see  
    Our boundless debt to Thee,  
Since all Thy deeds are blessings, in the end.

And let us feel and know that, being Thine,  
We are inheritors of hearts divine,  
    And hands endowed with skill,  
    And strength to work Thy will,  
And fashion to fulfilment Thy design.

So, let us thank Thee, with all self aside,  
Nor any lingering taint of mortal pride ;  
    As here to Thee we dare  
    Uplift our faltering prayer,  
Lend it some fervor of the glorified.

We thank Thee that our land is loved of Thee  
The blessed home of thrift and industry,  
    With ever-open door  
    Of welcome to the poor—  
Thy shielding hand o'er all abidingly.

AMERICA'S THANKSGIVING

E'en thus we thank Thee for the wrong that grew  
Into a right that heroes battled to,  
    With brothers long estranged,  
    Once more as brothers ranged  
Beneath the red and white and starry blue.

Ay, thanks—though tremulous the thanks expressed—  
Thanks for the battle at its worst, and best—  
    For all the clanging fray  
    Whose discord dies away  
Into a pastoral-song of peace and rest.



## OLD INDIANY

INTENDED FOR A DINNER OF THE INDIANA  
SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

OLD Indiany, 'course we know  
Is first, and best, and *most*, also,  
Of *all* the States' whole forty-four :—  
She's first in ever'thing, that's shore!—  
And *best* in ever'way as yet  
Made known to man ; and you kin bet  
She's *most*, because she won't confess  
She ever was, or will be, *less*!  
And yet, fer all her proud array  
Of sons, how many gits away!—

No doubt about her bein' *great*,  
But, fellers, she's a leaky State!  
And them that boasts the most about  
Her, them's the ones that's dribbled out.  
Law! jes' to think of all you boys  
'Way over here in Illinoise  
A-celebratin', like ye air,  
Old Indiany, 'way back there  
In the dark ages, so to speak,  
A-prayin' for ye once a week  
And wonderin' what's a-keepin' you  
From comin', like you ort to do.  
You're all a-lookin' well, and like  
You wasn't "sidin' up the pike,"  
As the tramp-shoemaker said  
When "he sacked the boss and shed  
The blame town, to hunt fer one  
Where they didn't work fer fun!"  
Lookin' *extr'y* well, I'd say,  
Your old home so fur away.—





Maybe, though, like the old jour.,  
Fun hain't all yer workin' fer.  
So you've found a job that pays  
Better than in them old days  
You was on The Weekly Press,  
Heppin' run things, more er less ;  
Er a-learnin' telegraph-  
Operatin', with a half-  
Notion of the tinner's trade,  
Er the dusty man's that laid  
Out designs on marble and  
Hacked out little lambs by hand,  
And chewed finecut as he wrought,  
"Shapin' from his bitter thought"  
Some squished mutterings to say,—  
"Yes, hard work, and porer pay!"  
Er you'd kind o' thought the far-  
Gazin' kuss that owned a car  
And took pictures in it, had  
Jes' the snap you wanted—bad!  
And you even wondered why  
He kep' foolin' with his sky-  
Light the same on shiny days  
As when rainin'. ('T leaked always.)

OLD INDIANY

Wondered what strange things was hid  
In there when he shet the door  
And smelt like a burnt drug store  
Next some orchard-trees, i swan'  
With whole roasted apples on!  
That's why Ade is, here of late,  
Buyin' in the dear old state,—  
So's to cut it up in plots  
Of both town and country lots.













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Riley songs of friendship

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